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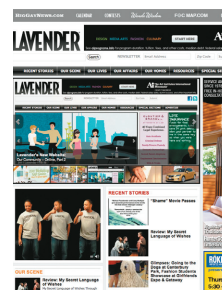
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## Valentines and Love

I'M SO sorry. If you lifted up this issue and spat or guffawed, I'm sorry. I know what we've done to Valentine's Day. I know we've made it a painful reminder of not being paired up or even romantically involved. What other euphemism can I use? Not hooked up? Not sheet dancing? Not committed? (Well, the double entendre of "committed" could definitely apply to some of us more often than not...I kid, I kid.) However you look at it, Valentine's Day can really smack for the singles. I'm sorry.

Gifts? Chocolate? Candlelit dinner? We can buy ourselves heart-shaped things, eat a box of chocolate, and dine in dim lighting any given day. By ourselves. We can snag our own flowers on they way home, trim their stupid stems, and arrange them in a vase to plunk on the counter. And we'll stinking like it. Do we feel good when we do this? If not, why don't we? Is it missing that validation of knowing that something was a gift from someone who cares?

This is when we need to talk ourselves off the ledge and get a grip. There are so many of us on the ledge that it's precarious, anyway. Unsafe.

Menacing.

It can also smack for the romantically involved. What can also put us on a ledge is not getting what we think we should receive on a day like Valentine's Day. Or, our gift not being received as we'd hoped. Oh, this isn't better or worse than not having a Valentine... it's different. But, think of the stress that happens when one person in the relationship is thinking that the box looks like it might contain jewelry, but it's really a Joni Mitchell box set. Then, the relationship is on the ledge, too.

Also menacing.

So, let's look at it from a different perspective—all of us, saddled or single. Whether on a ledge because we had to buy our own flowers or upset because the reservation was made at the wrong restaurant to our partner's chagrin, we can step back and look at love in a less limiting light.

There is a multitude of websites talking about the Love Languages. You can take quizzes. You can buy t-shirts. You can probably dial up a Love Language Horoscope for all I know. They're striking a chord because there could be some credence to the topic of love languages. I've heard about them for years and believe that the person who started the conversation with specific love languages in mind was Gary Chapman. Now, set aside that he may be talking from a perspective that may not want to be found in the pages of a GLBT publication (or revel in the fact that I'm throwing them in here as a sort of reclamation), and let's look at the love languages. Apparently, humans give and receive love in different ways; not all of them include cards in the shape of a heart or are restricted to one day a year.

Instead, Chapman asserts that there are five Love Language-

es. Loosely, they include 1.) what we say and how we say it (words); 2.) how and with whom we spend time (time); 3.) the gifts that we give and how we come to choose them (gifts); 4.) what we do for others (service); and 5.) how we physically express or receive affection (touch). These love languages aren't all about how we receive love, but how we give love. Expectations of others can get wacky when we receive love one way but they give it in another. If I would feel loved by you vacuuming while you'd rather give me diamonds, we're out of sync. (And I'm a little daft.)

So, for the coupled, knowing each other's love language is important—especially at high-anticipation days such as Valentine's Day. But, for the singles, it's also important to look around and see how others show us love all the time—without being required to by virtue of being in a relationship. Meeting for dinner and spending time together is a very valid expression of love, sans flowers or chocolate.

Think about how you might receive love. In my life, sure...I like presents and stuff, but they don't make my world go 'round. Spending time with friends is precious, but I probably take that more for granted than not. We aren't a terribly touchy lot, but we hug upon arrival and departure, usually. Again, as a matter of course, hugs are expressions of love—but peripheral. None of those really get me too amped, but all have roles in my life. It's logical that we don't rely solely on one of the love languages and none of the others, but that we have a scale of preferences.

It's taken a while, but I've figured myself out—at least for this era of my life. In romantic relations, communication is pinnacle; I'm a words woman. But, as far as friends and family are concerned, every time my people help me move to a new home, they've taken a day of time and given me hours of service. Whoa. Love. Not because I expect them to help, but because they do help. Willingly. I am deeply in love with my friends and family and feel great gratitude for their service.

Perhaps it's what we need most at the time. Service is appreciated when help is required. Words are appreciated because uncertainty is uncomfortable. Sometimes we need a hug or require a roll in the hay. The love languages might be completely contextual. No matter how mysterious or situational they are, there's still something to them.

Love helps us know who we are—as do the people with whom we have relationships. And, thinking about the languages of love gives us more even more insight. As I was working on the Valentine Gift Guide later in the issue, the one item that resonated was the small pendant that simply says “loved.” It doesn't need to be written on a pendant and gifted, but wouldn't that be nice to know? Somehow?

Whether Valentine's Day or any day, I hope you are loved.

With thanks,

Andy □



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## For the Rain It Raineth Every Day

FIVE MEN in Britain, wrote The Washington Post recently, are on trial for distributing leaflets titled “The Death Penalty” calling for gay people to be killed, and depicting a noose. They were charged under a new law that makes such actions a hate crime.

Quoted as calling the leaflets “frightening and nasty,” prosecutor Bobbie Cheema said the five were “part of a small group of men who distributed horrible, threatening literature, with quotations from religious sources and with pictures on them, which were designed to stir up hatred and hostility against homosexual people.”

Back on our side of the pond, the state of Tennessee has jumped in where Michigan feared to tread, with legislative bill HB1153. Using wording similar to those recently stricken from the Michigan Bill, the Family Action Council of Tennessee (FACT) is promoting state legislation to protect bullies who attack fellow students for their real—or perceived—sexual orientation. Like it’s defunct Michigan counterpart, HB1153 has specific protections for any students who wish to push their “religious, philosophical or political views.”

Now, we have our own “Minnesota Nice” version of anti-gay bigotry, recently presented to the Anoka-Hennepin School District 11

by Brian Lindquist and Mike Skaalerud of the Parents Action League (PAL). This group doesn’t yet suggest their progeny has the right to taunt and bully other children armored in the self-righteousness of their religion or moral beliefs. Instead, they announce that homosexuals are using the spurious theme of school safety “to advance a much broader agenda, the legitimization of homosexuality and related conduct to impressionable school children.”

To this end, PAL seeks to erase any mention of homosexuality and replacing any GLBT studies or GSA groups with a list (not read at the time) of “pro-family, ex-homosexual, ex-transgender information to all counselors, school psychologists [and] classroom teachers.”

PAL invoked *Meyers v. Nebraska* as a possible cause for their taking legal action—a 1923 Supreme Court case involving Nebraska’s 1919 law preventing the teaching of foreign languages—i.e. German. In a recent Edgewise, I said that Michigan’s changes made, “A happier ending, but still a cautionary tale illustrating that one must be continually vigilant to ensure that others’ religious and moral codes are not being forced on the general population.” It’s not over by along shot. ■



Melissa Houghtaling

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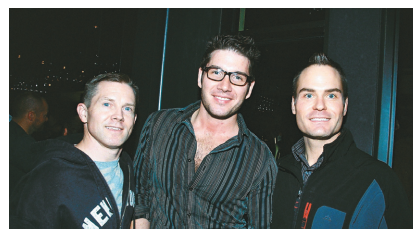
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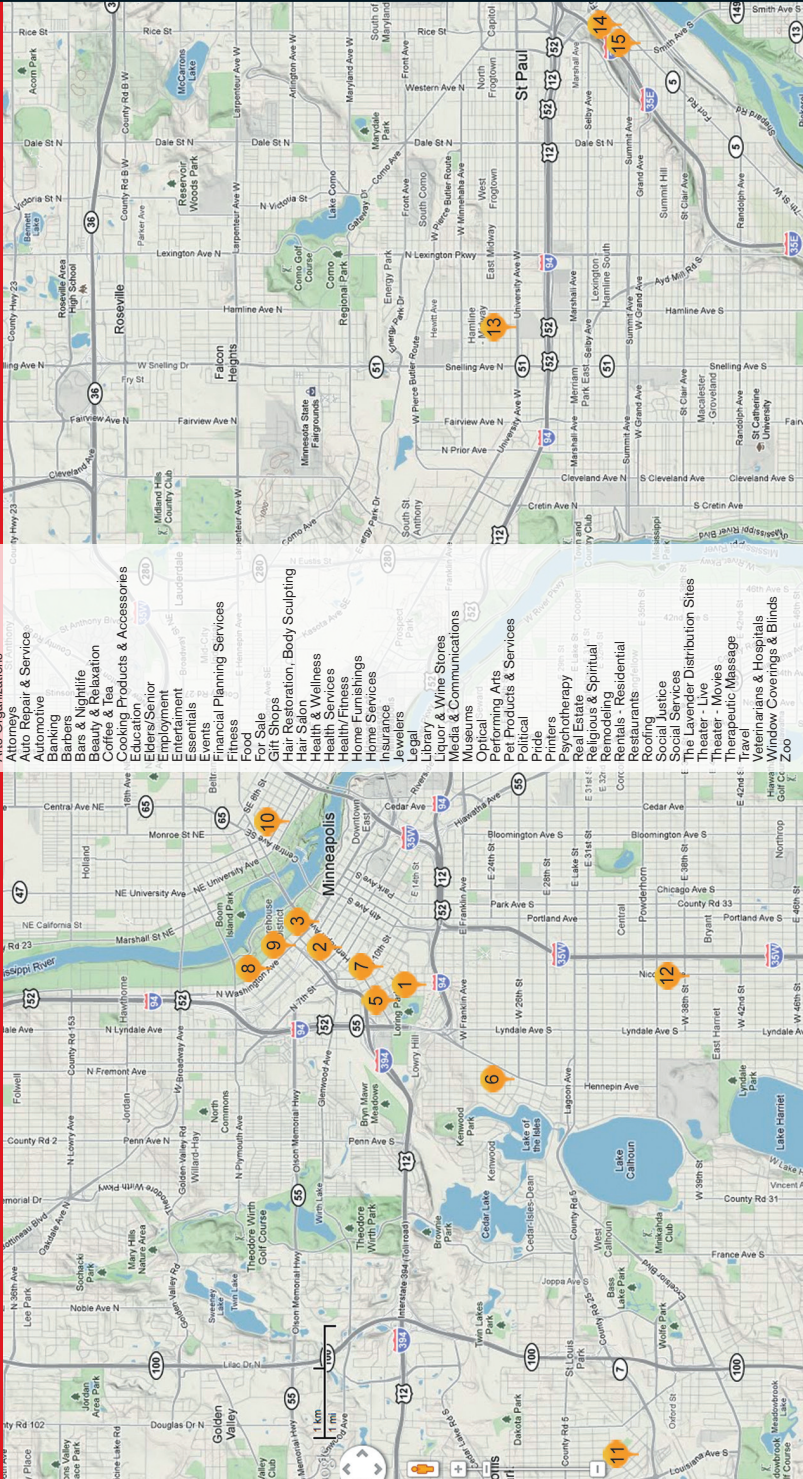


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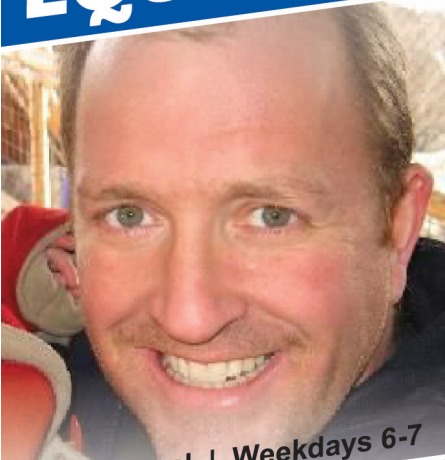
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La Belle Vie

Photo by Mike Hnida



# Valentine dining

Nothing makes the long, cold winter nights pass more quickly than when the heart-felt home fires are fully stoked. Valentine's Day is a perfect evening to spend tucked into a quiet corner, stealing admiring gazes, sharing bites of delicious foods and celebrating the heart that grows ever fonder. It's also the busiest restaurant night in the industry, so get those reservations set and make sure your date's calendar is clear, we have a list of our favorite date night spots to toast your sweet heart.

**La Belle Vie** ♥ Old world class drips from the crystal chandeliers. In the dining room denizens of servers await your every wish. Before you've even realized that a dish is done, or a wine glass has approached the bottom, someone arrives to care for each need, allowing you ample time for soul gazing with your besotted. While the formal dining room might be a bit of a steep price tag for some, the lounge is just as elegant and allows guests

to order from the smaller portions on the bar menu. The crepes with miniscule drops of sunshine masquerading as quail eggs is one of the most elegant, delicate and deliciously constructed dishes in the city. Meanwhile, the incredibly talented Diane Yang creates edible sculptures of pastry that wouldn't look out of place on display in any gallery. It's simply the best of the best, and isn't that what your love deserves?





Meritage

Cassoulet at Meritage. Photo by Andy Lien



**Corner Table** ♥ This small neighborhood gem has undergone big changes this year. What was once run by Farm to Table advocate and Chef Scott Pampuch is now under the care of Nick Rancone and his wife Chenny. The kitchen is manned by Thomas Boemer, who has some big time credentials, coming to Minneapolis from the Las Vegas kitchen of Alain Ducasse. They are still churning out fresh, seasonal cuisine with a generous amount of lushness. Their cassoulet, creamy white beans may be a traditional French peasant dish, but as served by this staff, is the height of elegance. Nick's background is with some old-school Chicago steakhouses, so service is more what you'd expect with white linens rather than neighborhood joints. Ask them to pair the wine; they never miss. The

restaurant itself is intimate and just dim enough to compliment a romantic mood while they spin classic LP's to set the restaurant's ambiance, which is always intimate, comfortable and elegant.

**Meritage** ♥ There's something so inherently romantic about the French – from the lyrical language, to the origination of the great wines, to the food. Dishes dipped in *butter*, supple oysters, the intricate love of pastries, the French take their food seriously. The best spot to dip your toes in a bit of French culinary delight is to snag a small bistro table at Russell and Desta Klein's Meritage in downtown Saint Paul. Gaze through the wall-length windows in the ethereally lit park while enjoying elegant bits of scrumptious food. After adding the oyster bar last

year, the drinks available at Meritage have risen to the top of the liquorati's must-sip list. Try a Sauzerac; all bitter and scandalous and wickedly saucy like any good affair.

**Piccolo** ♥ Great does not have to mean big. Doug Flicker's tiny restaurant in South Minneapolis astounds mouths night after night. Flicker is a master of flavor and given any ingredient, be it hamachi collar a pig trotter, he elevates the humble to the regal. The menu, like the restaurant, is small, but carefully curated. The staff is attentive and affable, incredibly well-versed in the menu and wine list with a deft ability to select pairing. They are also kind enough that if you were to say, knock over a wine glass and watch it loudly clang its way around the entire dining room floor, a server would quickly swoop it ➔



## Victory 44



The Perfect Burger and Bacon Fries at Victory 44. Photo by Andy Lien



up and never for one second judge you as a klutz that you may very well be. Not that I know about this sort of circumstance first hand. (I promise not to interrupt your meal.)

**Victory 44** ♥ When thinking of a gastro-pub type setting that made a splash with the revolutionary idea of chefs as servers in the North metro area, another name might pop into mind, but Victory 44 is a neighborhood spot worth driving to. Tucked back in a far corner that may technically be Minneapolis, but feels like Robbinsdale, this sweet spot is presided over by Chef Erick Harcey. A chef who is just as comfortable preparing food with liquid nitrogen as he is simply butchering cuts of pork, he creates cuisine that is as intimately familiar as it is fresh and exciting.

While a simple burger and fries includes the genius that is bacon powder, I'd urge a little adventure in this dining experience. His commitment to snout to tail cuisine means that items like sweetbreads, terrines or anything involving a duck will be divine. Go ahead, take a little risk, the rewards can be so sweet.

**Little Szechuan** ♥ St. Louis Park – What better way to stoke those fiery love embers than by coating your mouth in the wickedly floral spice of the Szechuan peppercorn? This new location serves most of the same traditional dishes of the restaurant's original location, but these new digs are way swankier; elegance with chop sticks. For a dinner inferno, I recommend the beef in spicy broth for the red-faced sweat. The

tea-smoked duck is a much milder, though thoroughly flavored packed meal. Sip on the subtly flavored complimentary green tea served with each meal. The heat of the tea helps with the heat of the blazing dishes, strange, but wonderfully true.

**Riverview Wine Bar** ♥ Exquisitely intimate, this small bistro abuts the neighborhood coffee shop. Open only in the evenings with dim lights and a roaring fire, this is a perfect setting for lovers who'd like to feel like they're the only two in the room. Soothing music enhances the romance as does the labyrinth of wine flights. Travel all over the world by the glass. The food is rustic and straightforward with some fantastic pizzas. ➔



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**joan's in the Park** ♥ The exterior belies the sweet familial surrounding held within this new entry to the neighborhood restaurant running. joan's in the Park is owned and run by partners Joan Schmitt and Susan Dunlop who serve steakhouse fare balanced with just a touch of femininity. Joan, the chef, takes down the beef herself, so the steaks are perfectly cut, gorgeously prepared, and served by the gracious front of house managed by Dunlop. Their love is evident in every wall adornment, each table setting and shared with every diner. The mindfully selected wine list with some gorgeous, bold decrees of flavor pair beautifully with the steaks flat-breads and pronouncements of undying love.

**Restaurant Alma** ♥ James Beard award winning chef, Alex Robert's restaurant has the confident cool swagger that's so easy to bask in. While they've been open for almost thirteen years, they continue to take seasonal, sustainable ingredients and produce elegantly delicious dishes. The entire restaurant is all supple blonde wood that dances in the shimmering candle light. The room noise hovers at just the right volume to protect your every word, so if you slip and use that schmoopy nickname, no one will be the wiser.

**Wilde Roast Café** ♥ It may seem an obvious choice, but it's hard to ignore this spot. What was once a cozy coffee house has become a café destination. The expanded menu includes an affordable, approachable wine list alongside plenty of local brews. The seating allows for you to snuggle on a



Wilde Roast Café

Intimate seating at Wilde Roast. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

couch or tuck away in a dimly lit corner. It's also a relaxed atmosphere where you are sincerely welcomed. The food is straightforward American Bistro Fare, also a great pick if your sweetie is a bit picky. While we Rat Lavender may give a lot of love to Wilde

Roast (our perennial Fab 50 winner,) it's only because it's a deep, sustaining love that only grows stronger with time, a perfect toast to a holiday built for love. □



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There should be some ancient historical bond that connects chocolate with lovers. But the old world was only introduced to chocolate through the voyages of Christopher Columbus and Hernando Cortez, who was granted his first taste by the great Montezuma himself. Both Cortez and Columbus brought this strange delight with them on the long voyage home, where the Spanish court kept their prize a closely-guarded secret for almost 100 years. However, even after the Spaniards lost control of their treasure, chocolate remained a plaything for the well-to-do.

And yet, it wasn't this element of forbidden luxury that bound chocolate inextricably with romantic love. Chocolate remained marginalized until it was given to U.S. soldiers in World War II to help sustain them through the horrors of battle. And it was these same war-weary men who introduced it to their sweethearts once they finally returned. By the 1970s, 90% of the candy purchased for Valentine's Day was chocolate.

It certainly isn't the romantic story one hopes for when one goes scouting. Still, we have enjoyed a long, dramatic affair with chocolate, filled with violence and greed, and a passion that borders on obsession. Chocolate has helped us through some of our darkest, loneliest hours. To ignorant eyes, chocolate reveals none of its riches, but once tasted, it quickens the pulse, stimulates the senses, and surrenders pleasure in its purest form. Per-







haps it is an apt metaphor for love after all.

Robyn Dochterman and her long-time partner, Deidre Pope, had often made chocolates for Christmas. Dochterman, a former journalist with the *Star Tribune* (and before that, *Equal Time*), knew she wanted to pursue something food-related, but once she took a class with the French Pastry School, artisan chocolates became her passion. Since then, she's studied under Christophe More and Jean-Marie Auboine, and will soon be applying air brush techniques from Chris Hammer (*Top Chef: Just Desserts*).

Even for those who have experienced fine chocolates from around the world, Dochterman offers something entirely unique—exquisite chocolate, inventive flavors and local ingredients, presented with such beauty that opening a box literally takes one's breath away.

However, when the duo opened up shop at Marine St. Croix in the spring of 2010, many of their neighbors thought they wouldn't last. Marine is a small town of about 700, and sustaining an artisan chocolate shop year round seemed unlikely. But excellent chocolate has a strange way of being addictive. Dochterman explains, "There will always be someone local who will come in. Even last year when we got 14" of snow, a local came in and bought chocolate. And I just have such an overwhelming gratitude for people who have made us part of their lives."

There are flavors that Dochterman doesn't dare eliminate, because, as she puts it, "There would be hell to pay." However, the shop introduces seasonal inspirations that take advantage of local ingredients like black raspberries, wild grapes, black walnuts, and even violets. "I had violets blooming in my backyard...so I learned to candy the violets and make violet



Deidre Pope (left) and Robyn Dochterman. Photo by Margaret Andrews



liqueur and violet extract, and I made a violet chocolate,” she states.

Additionally, Dochterman gets as many ingredients as she can from local, organic sources. Milk and cream come from Crystal Ball Farms in Osceola; their maple syrup hails from Franconia. Even their own wildflower honey makes its way into their chocolate. Chocolate, however, is a tropical product, and so Dochterman selects only the best from single-source, organic and fair trade companies around the world.

Her confections often incorporate a textural element, as in her peanut butter chocolate, which balances a rich peanuty center that straddles the line between creamy and crunchy, with milk chocolate that’s pleasantly assertive. And like many European chocolatiers, Dochterman often incorporates layers of intense flavor that develop as one savors each bite. For this experience, try her pear caramel: home-made sweet pear jelly and luscious caramel, encased in a milk chocolate shell. Pop it in your mouth, roll it around on your tongue, and bite down slowly. Do this while still in her shop, and never mind if Dochterman waits for your reaction. “Watching people eat chocolate...I should make a Youtube video of it because it makes you smile. It makes you happy to make other people happy,” she says.

Dochterman will be making several special products for Valentine’s Day, including new flavors, heart-shaped chocolates and special boxes. Additionally, St. Croix Chocolate Company is working with several local artists to create keepsake boxes and unique molds. For more information or to make a purchase, visit [stcroixchocolateco.com](http://stcroixchocolateco.com), call the shop at 651-433-1400, or swing by 261 Parker Street.

And as for love and chocolate, Dochterman credits both her partner Diedre, and her involvement with the gay community for helping her follow her heart: “There’s a huge amount of pride in the community. I think I’ve always carried that with me no matter what I did.

You just go about the business of being yourself, and loving yourself the same way you love whoever you love.” □





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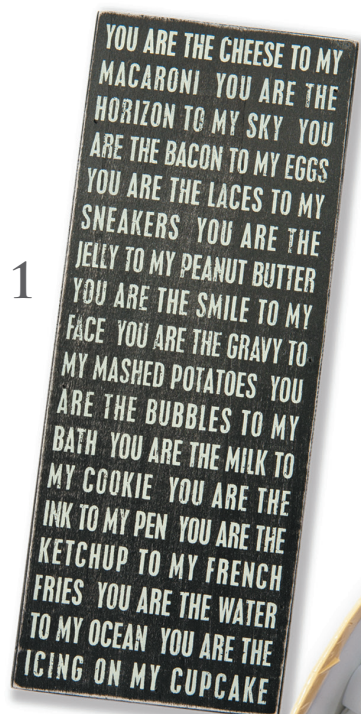
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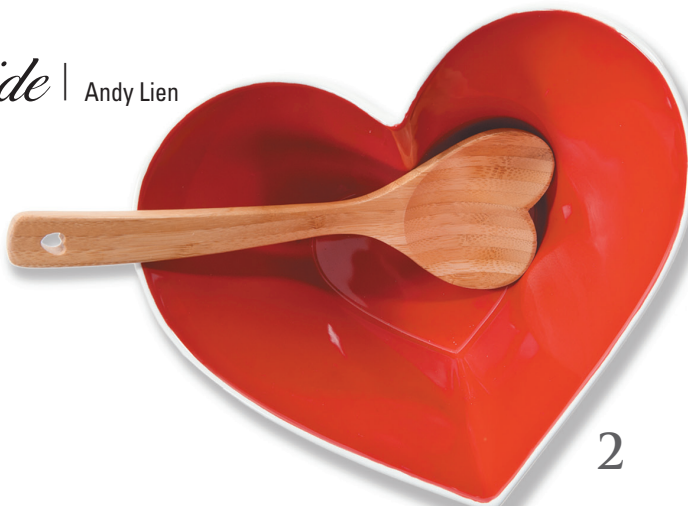
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# Valentine Gift Guide | Andy Lien



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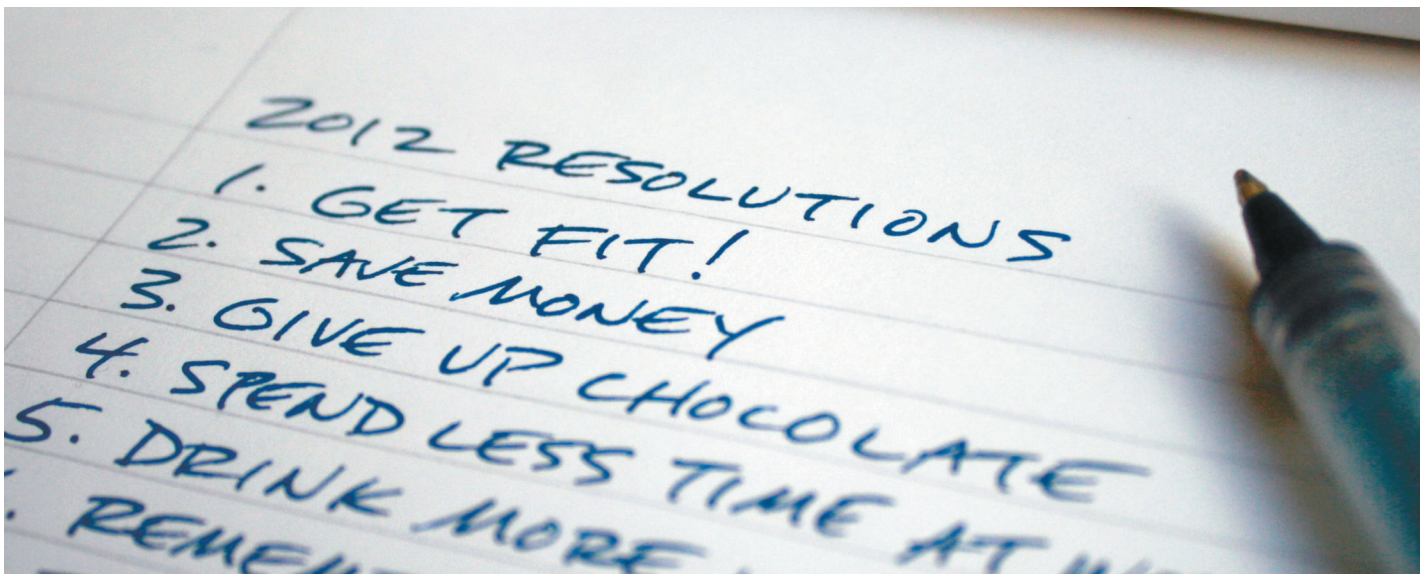




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## Tracie Bennett, the Guthrie's Judy Garland



Tracie Bennet as Judy Garland. Photo by Robert Day

### Tracie Bennett Talks About the Exploitation of a Child Star Whose Legacy is Gay Legend

"There wasn't a thing that gal couldn't do – except take care of herself." – Bing Crosby

Judy Garland (1922-69) was perhaps the greatest musical star Hollywood ever produced.

Her short life still haunts us and has been the subject of many stage treatments. But playwright Peter Quilter's smash hit London musical, *End of the Rainbow*, is considered to be the gold standard. It now plays in a limited run at the Guthrie with Tracie Bennett, its London star. Though this ecstatically praised play with music features various Garland vocal mainstays like *The Trolley Song*, *Come Rain or Shine*, and *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, Bennett says it's about "acting pieces rather than songs, so it's not a tribute. There's elegant Judy,

happy Judy, old-fashioned medley film *You Made Me Love You* Judy, the drugged Judy, and then we see 'absolutely fucking it up in the concert' Judy."

Judy Garland was born Frances Ethel Gumm in Grand Rapids, Minnesota in 1922. Rumor has it that the family had to leave town because her father, Frank, made passes at young local men. Her mother by all accounts was cruel. And both parents, who were vaudevillians, promoted Frances Ethel and her two sisters, Mary Jane and Dorothy Virginia, as a singing trio before Frances Ethel became Judy Garland when signing on with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) in 1935. When she died of a drug overdose in 1969, some say that the shock and disbelief by Judy's adoring gay fans fed into ➔





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the fury of gay lib's historic Stonewall Riots.

Judy made several memorable films. *Meet Me in St. Louis* was one of the most popular films of the 1940s and her astounding turns in *A Star is Born* and *Judgement at Nuremberg* are among her most admired performances. She married Vincente Minnelli, who directed two of the 1950s' greatest films, *An American in Paris* and *Some Came Running*, which I submit is The Great American Film. Minnelli was often said to be gay or bisexual. Their daughter Liza (*Cabaret*, *Tell Me That You Love Me*, *Junie Moon*, and *The Sterile Cuckoo*) became a phenomenon herself. Garland's other daughter, Lorna Luft (father, Sid Luft), is a highly accomplished actress herself. Both daughters have been enduring supporters of GLBT equality and AIDS funding. I spoke with Olivier-winner Bennett about her views and research. I was struck by how far we've come yet how similar we still are regarding the values of Judy's time on earth. Consider how GOP Tea Partiers in some state legislatures and Congress actually want to roll back child labor laws. In the past, the lack of such laws paved the way for exploitation of child actors and other child workers.

**JT: Judy Garland is perhaps the biggest show biz icon in gay culture. There's a kind of goddess worship of brilliant female singers that gay men have long exalted. What are your thoughts on her popularity with gay men over the generations?**

TB: It's not just the goddess worship thing, it's the connection with the tragedy surrounding her. My gay friends in London said that at that time they wanted to protect her. She's vulnerable and they all wanted to protect her because their story is her story. She sings the torch songs and the tragedy songs. Like they would understand the torture of her life. That's what they tell me.

**JT: Judy's drug addiction is said to have begun at a very young age.**

TB: When she was hired to to the studio (MGM) by age 11 or 12 then the wonder drugs came in like dexadrine. And nobody knew they were addictive. They were marvelous, allegedly. They got you up. You looked fabulous. You slimmed down. Your brain was focused. And they were fantastic and they were the hardcore ones that obviously she kept taking. But I believe that by the time she did *The Wizard of Oz* (released in 1939) that she was totally an addict.

**JT: Alot points to her mother being very domineering. She was the classic stereotypical stage mother and enabled what we might call today, her prescription drug use.**

TB: It might be hearsay but apparently she didn't like her mother at all – the control element. She was allegedly very pushy in the studio. The control that her mother had and that the studio had, to either get married or not get married, to not have a baby or get a baby. What does that do to a person? What does it mean when you can't get a Knickerbocker Glory when you're 12? You want a Knickerbocker Glory! You want to be a kid! But of course, you're working! And the laws were very different then. But the mother thing got kind of sorted out because she died in a car park (parking lot). But she did have kind of a love/hate relationship.

**JT: Her second husband Vincente Minnelli – how did he shape her?**

TB: He made her beautiful. She felt fabulous. He was a gentle man. They take him for gay, whether he was or not. He couldn't deal with her by the end. There's a story. They were married. She was in Paris.

They were walking down the Seine and she said 'hold my hand' and she had a vial of pills and she just threw them in the River Seine. And there was an unwritten thing meaning I will never take these again. I don't need them. Well of course, she did because he started working really hard on something or other and she was getting more and more demanding. So she felt left alone. So the more she got left alone the more she took tablets again and the more he got into work.

**JT: There was a very different view of children and child labor when Judy was growing up. She was a girl of her time and then some. It's very easy for people of different circumstances and of later generations to get puritanical and call her a slut or a dope addict.**

TB: That era was a nightmare! Of course, they wouldn't know the difference maybe then that we do now. It's hard to erase what we know now and look back then, now isn't it? It wasn't easy for women and I'm sure it wasn't easy for anyone.

My own mother wasn't allowed to buy property unless she was married. My mother said she couldn't have a bank account, so maybe you did have to have a protector who dealt with your money. (In Hollywood) Lana Turner could go out because she was a sex symbol – with a chaperone. But Judy couldn't even go out because she was meant to have a family-oriented kind of image – the girl next door image.

It shocks me that people used to get married so many times. But they couldn't live together 'in sin' could they? That must have changed somebody's head – marrying people too quickly. Not just Judy -everybody! Because you couldn't kind of live together. That puts terrible pressure on people.

You were meant to be like this. You were meant to be like that. You were meant to do this. You were not meant to do that. People still look at me and say, you're not married. You must be a lesbian. And I'm like no. What if I didn't want to? We've got the opportunity to say that now without bothering, but there's still that kind of bigotry somewhere down the line. But then, in that era, she must have been driven bananas with control.

**JT: As much as I love, and I do love, vintage Hollywood films, I now know how stringently controlled the actors were. Actors, for whom observation of people is central to their acting craft. But how can you observe when everyone in public is observing you?**

TB: That's absolutely very true. But the other side of it is that inside that contract for seven years you knew what that entails. Now I'm not saying that Judy did because she was a kid for God's sake.

**JT: Her mother would have handled all that.**

TB: Exactly. So she, by default, had to do what she was told without being given the choice, nor (did she as a child) have the intellect maybe, legally to read everything. She wouldn't have known. So you pushed and pulled. A lot of mothers were doing that at the time. They're still doing it now. And you're going: haven't you learned anything? ■

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Nick Rancone, new face at the front of the house of Corner Table (left). Photo by Hubert Bonnet; Thomas Boemer in the kitchen at

# Corner Table

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A couple of months ago a friend of mine wouldn't stop raving about a place I had to go back and try. Buzzing like an attractive wasp with designer lipstick, I finally gave in and agreed to go. Ever since, I've been a convert, spreading that good gospel. The restaurant to visit right now





en at Corner Table (right). Photo by Andy Lien.

is Corner Table, an intimate café in the Kingfield neighborhood.

You may remember Corner Table as the home of chef/owner Scott Pampuch. An advocate for sustainable farming, his passion had led him to new endeavors (including an upcoming TV series hosting, "In Search of Food" on Ovation and likely much more.) When he left, it sounded distinctly like a death knell for this little space. Not so. After some staff turnover a new team landed in place that have managed to retain what was wonderful and added their own elegant flair.

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## SLICE



Bacon and eggs. Photos by Hubert Bonnet

vice. With Chef Thomas Boemer, running the kitchen, the humble spot has been reborn as the dining destination of the moment.

Nick grew up in West Saint Paul before leaving for Chicago to study Poetry and Creative Fiction in college, which he joked, was code for “professional server.” He eventually left school and threw himself wholeheartedly into the art of front of house, working at some old-school steak houses, and studying wine pairings.

Thomas was born in Minnesota, but grew up in the Carolinas. He recalled when his love affair with food first began. He’d gone to a friend’s house. His friend wasn’t there, but his mother was. She was standing over a batch of cut up chicken, soaking in buttermilk. She dropped each piece into flour seasoned with salt, pepper, paprika and just a little bit of sugar before frying it in a big ol’ cast iron skillet. She took the time to show him how it was done, which began a bubbling culinary passion.

He worked his way up through the kitchen ranks before setting out for that dusty crown on the Western horizon, Las Vegas. He’d heard of a restaurant that was opening and, through a friend of a friend, hoped to snag an interview. The chef was Alain Ducasse. Thomas spent the next few years working there, learning the strenuous French technique cold.

It was through Pampuch that they found their way to the restaurant. Chenny first worked with Scott at one of his Tour de Farm events and that eventually led to both she and Nick working the front of house at the restaurant.

Thomas had been drifting around looking for the perfect place to land. He wanted something small and intimate, and while he’d considered opening his own place, he found a home at Corner Table.

My first meal began with what they playfully called eggs and bacon. Soft scrambled eggs served with a slab of pork belly that is slowly confited, cooked in a gentle way to preserve the unctuous fat integrity (yes, fat has integrity.) Then, just before being served,



the belly gets a quick sear, bringing out that little bit of sweetness, a crunchy exterior that melts into a luscious chew, textured with glorious pork. It's served with a bit of spicy, salty, funky, kimchee made in-house and topped with a tiny sliver of crispy garlic. Even the detail of cooking the garlic isn't so simple, Thomas lays the slices in cold oil, bringing it gradually up to temperature where the garlic gets just a little crispy and retains its wonderfully intense flavor. In that one simple dish each bit was familiar, salty, rich and decadent and yet entirely new. The eggs were so luscious, the curd so tiny, they spread like fine pate on a crispy slice of Lavosh.

The dish that followed was equally stunning in its simplicity, a humble, beautiful cassoulet. Supple, creamy beans hidden beneath a crust of buttery, brown crumbs. Plunging a spoon in yielded the satisfying crunch of a great cr me br lee.

Gnocchi arrived masquerading as scallops. Fat and crispy, pillow-soft on the interior, crunchy brown on the outside, served over a silken, sunchoke puree, paired with earthen, rich, wood-ear mushrooms, and topped with crisped sunchoke, cooked in the same slow way as the garlic chips.

Each course was paired with a perfect wine. Thomas and Nick work together, crafting the menu both by the seasonal ingredients available and by the wines that Nick brings in. This included finding a wine to pair with a funky, sweet squash dessert served in a jam jar. I couldn't even begin to think of how to pair that, but Nick's choice was spot on.

The staff work constantly on developing dishes, and available ingredients can change daily (which is one reason it's best to ignore the website for anything other than street directions, because the menu is in a constant state of delicious flux). They describe a dish when it's ready as "happy." When they get to "go to the happy place," that's when a dish is ready to be served.

Walking out of the current incarnation of Corner Table feels like a reluctant departure from an elegant, easy, expertly thrown dinner party. It's not just what they're doing, it's *how* they're doing it. Such a precarious balance that they've achieved; they've hit the sweet spot, my happy place. □

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→ **The Naked I: Eyes Wide Open** — Twenty Percent Twin Cities has found their niche as a voice for transgender-oriented plays. Not since Actors for Change in the early 1990s has a local theater devoted so much creative energy toward trans themes. In 2009 their festival of mini-plays, *The Naked I: Beyond the Binary* illuminated issues of transgender identity. Three years later the new *Naked I: Eyes Wide Open* delves deeper and wider with contributions by various trans, gender nonconforming, and allied performance-based artists.

Erica Fields is directing *Evolution* by Jessica Englund. She says, "It is a piece that explores the emotional pain and searching of the partner of a transgender person. It is this character's monologue that touches on the difficulty in understanding who her partner really is, the sadness of watching her struggle with her identity, and the inevitable question of what should she do? It is written about a lesbian couple but it could be the story of any partnership and any gender. In my own transition I had to witness the struggle that my then wife had to go through to deal with the idea of her husband becoming a woman. It was very painful and there was no one for her to turn to. I was glad to get a chance to use the experience of witnessing her struggle in directing this piece. We sometimes refer to transition as a journey. This is a hidden journey that is rarely seen. This journey of the partner of a transgender person in the beginning stages of her own journey is not explored enough and this piece does an excellent job of showing that side of transition."

Fields is also acting in *Pink and Blue: A (short) Love Story* by Andrea Jenkins directed by Katie Stark. In this play a transgender woman is in love with a cis-gender woman. The play explores the difficulty of feeling and expressing that love in society. Fields says, "It is about her struggle to accept her lover and to express her love to her. It deals with the duality in life, the back and forth of feelings and expression of those feelings." There are two characters. I play a character who is trying to figure out her feelings for her girlfriend." Zealot Hamm is Fields's co-actor in a play where both characters are unnamed. (Cis-gender refers to someone who is born into the same body as their inherent gender identity.)

Fields's own play, *Congruity*, will also be staged. She says "I wrote it after a night out with a girlfriend of mine, who also writes a column for *Lavender* – Ellen Krug. We had dinner one night a few months after my gender reassignment surgery. We were enjoying dinner at the Loring Pasta bar. It was crowded. As I walked to the ladies room, it struck me, I was not nervous about bumping into tables. This was odd. I had always been a bit clumsy. As I thought about it I realized that it was more than the wine or the fun of the night. It was actually something deeper. I began to realize that becoming my true self and gender, was more than just physically becoming a woman. It was like I had just synched my whole being through this procedure and the process of transitioning genders. In fact it was beyond gender. I was now able to walk through life in balance. In synch. In congruity."

Ariel Leaf directs *Queer Confessions* performed by Jenn Western. Leaf calls it, "a sexy, self-affirming monologue about a person that, the more she allows herself to dress and conduct herself as a man, the more she welcomes and accepts her given gender as a woman. It's about discovering a freedom in walking the gender line, in flirting with perceived identity and the acceptance of herself as not one label -butch, femme, etc.- but as coming down to, and loving herself with the simple term 'queer'."

And as *Naked I* contributor Anthony Neumann points out, "being a little bit vulnerable, a little bit naked, if you will, is what this project is about." **Through Feb. 18 • Intermedia Arts, 2822 Lyndale Av. S., Mpls. • (612) 227-1188 • [www.tctwentypercent.org](http://www.tctwentypercent.org)**



*Ragtime*. Photo by Petronella Ytsma

***Ragtime*** — Terrence McNally is known for his edgy gay-themed plays *Love! Valor! Compassion!* and *Corpus Christi*. But he also steps beyond that at times such as with this musical. Director Gary Gisselman calls McNally's stage adaptation of a novel that he loves "Very skillful. The historic and cultural sweep of E. L. Doctorow's novel is difficult to capture on stage and was equally difficult in a rather mediocre film, but McNally has done it well. What is also difficult to capture is Doctorow's ironic viewpoint, which I find in some degree in the adaptation and we will try to find in the production as well. Lavender readers may be interested in Emma Goldman's presence in the piece. Her advocacy for open love, birth control and bisexuality was certainly revolutionary for the mainstream in 1906 and if the Iowa Caucus is any true indicator, still is." Kersten Rodau plays Goldman. Music by Stephen Flaherty. Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens. **Through Feb. 19 • Park Square Theatre, 20 W. 7th Pl., St. Paul • (651) 291-7005 • [www.park-squaretheatre.org](http://www.park-squaretheatre.org)**





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PHOTO: TRACIE BENNETT (NOBBY CLARK)



**The Lion King** — Check any negative prejudices at the door for the show being 'Disney', or a megahit, or 'spectacular'. Yes. It is all those and it's also one of the most imaginatively and inspirationally directed ensemble productions you will ever see, joyously packed with food for thought and feeling. Moreover, its current Orpheum incarnation is as crisp and passionate as ever, even after all these years.

Of course, it's widely agreed upon that Julie Taymor's direction of *The Lion King* (which actually started at the Orpheum) is rightly considered to be singular and legendary. But she is also called on to direct other plays and marvelous films like *Across the Universe* and *The Tempest*. So that's why Associate Director, John Stefaniuk, is so important to Taymor's vision. He shares, "I want to maintain Julie's vision created 15 years ago in Minneapolis. The challenge remains to keep that same energy, that same story, that same passion intact, while still remaining fresh and still allowing the show to breathe and grow with the company you have at any given time. In essence it's the simplicity of the story and the way Julie has gone about telling it with the puppetry and the use of the African music. I think she does it with great honesty, heart, passion and originality. And what my job has been over the years is to maintain that while still allowing the voice of any given actor to be heard and to allow the energy of any given company to be expressed." **Through Feb. 12 • Orpheum Theatre, 910 Hennepin Av., Mpls. • (800) 859-7469 • [www.hennepintheatretrust.org](http://www.hennepintheatretrust.org)**

**Julius Caesar** — The Acting Company and the Guthrie combine energies once again to produce a Shakespeare classic. Sometimes productions tend to impose a political agenda given this tragedy's inquiry into political intrigue, assassination, and the conflict between Republicanism and ancient monarchy. Director Rob Melrose says, "Obviously this won't be the first modern dress production of *Julius Caesar*. In fact, the play has been notoriously used in the past to make one-sided political points about current events. I felt that using the play this way goes against the spirit of the Shakespeare play. Shakespeare goes to great pains to give each side its say. Even Brutus is given a chance to explain his reasons for considering his actions. No one is demonized. My interest in using modern dress is for us to be more engaged with Shakespeare's story, not to create a new story of my own. To be immediate, not clever." **Through Feb. 5 • Guthrie Theater, 818 So. 2nd St., Mpls. • (612) 377-2224 • [www.guthrietheater.org](http://www.guthrietheater.org)**



*The Lion King* Assistant Director, John Stefaniuk, with Whoopi Goldberg (not in Minneapolis production). Photo by Steve Fenn/ABC

**Werther** — In this opera, first staged in 1892, Mary Dibern, Minnesota Opera's Head of Music, says that composer Jules Massenet (1842-1912) "expresses a mixture of dream and reality that mirrors the passion and confusion of both central characters. Werther (James Valenti) is longing for the 'perfect love'. His opening music uses a harp and woodwinds, especially haunting clarinet melodies. The clarinet is often used in an orchestra as a substitute for a voice, and here the clarinet is expressing what Werther cannot. The harp chords remind us that Werther is looking for this heaven on earth. And when he first declares his love to Charlotte, he says that she has a 'celestial' smile. For Charlotte (Roxana Constantinescu), the key instrument is the saxophone! Adolph Sax invented a whole family of different sized saxophones in the 1840s. Massenet uses its rich, and somewhat nostalgic and mournful timbre, mingled with standard orchestral instruments, to create a unique sound which is often heard when Charlotte is experiencing the intense emotion brought into her life by the romanticism of Werther." **Through Feb. 5 • Ordway Center, 345 Washington St., St. Paul • (612) 333-6669 • [www.mnopera.org](http://www.mnopera.org)**



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## Pink Chic

**PINK-CHIC:** adj: 1. Stylish and attention grabbing while making an entrance; ex. "Her entrance pink-chic, guests lusted after her style, her glance..."

And what an entrance it was. This fall, new restaurant Rosa Mexicano made her own pink-chic debut downtown. Her atmosphere combines sexy with sophisticated, and nowhere was this more apparent than at Rosa's exclusive grand opening reception in October.

Senses pique when we enter the party—the sights, sounds, and smells first rush us, then simmer as our "entrance" becomes our "evening." Modern, seductive, vibrant (pink-purple) décor greets us with two floor-to-ceiling, glass-backed water walls flanking the bar lounge that add a soothing ambiance to a loud hum of clinking glasses and friendly conversation. One smells a combination of guests' perfumes and the restaurant's succulent dishes. Fashionable guests mingle with businesspeople. Staff wind through the crowd with complementary margaritas and house specialties.

Bar Manager Ryan Reed greets us as we take in the scene. His demeanor is one of a seasoned party host—calm, confident, and thoughtful. He makes us feel as if we're the only guests in the house,

and sets the tone for our evening at Rosa. This isn't just another restaurant opening; the event is, in itself, the experience: the feeling that one gets at an intimate dinner party with friends, despite hundreds of guests present.

After Ryan settles us for the evening, my friends and I explore the place. There's the seafood bar sculpted entirely out of ice (commissioned specially for the evening), an enormous wraparound balcony on which to take in the city's nightlife, and a stunning dining room complete with a fountain above which dozens of swimmers dive in perpetual suspension.

Then, danger. Tucked away behind a live mariachi band at the back of the restaurant, is a Tequila tasting station. Yours truly resisted, so I cannot comment on the wonderful selection, but rest assured—no taster left with dissatisfaction on his lips.

There's nothing like that moment of entry, when the newest arrivals are as much an object of display as the venue itself. Her arrival, anticipated though it was, was no disappointment. So, Rosa, it was a pleasure to meet you. Welcome to town. ▣



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# For Valentine's Day, Treat Yourself

HOLIDAYS COME with their own levels of expectation—turkey for one, champagne toasts on another. It is no wonder that Valentine's Day may require the most daunting of all expectations: a willing participant. Sending cards, delivering flowers, sharing chocolates, dinner reservations and the rest ... it's an overwhelming holiday if you're short a partner or, worse yet, you have a partner who refuses to participate!

So, let us manage our expectations and find some fun and frivolity in the magic of the pop-up Valentine Day market, hosted by Meg Gilliland of Nutmeg Style.

Bringing together some of the city's best artists and craftspeople, Meg has organized a fun event with a fabulous mix of finds. With her background in event planning, floral design and social networking, Meg easily puts together unique vendors of ceramics, jewelry, apparel, foods, home décor and fresh flowers. One of her finds this year is unique skin products to soothe your woes, from Sandy Bartel of Body Butter. "It's just fabulous," says Jennifer Reis, a professional housekeeper who really knows what dry hands can feel like.

I Heart You Valentine's Market offers manufacturers and goods that are unique as you are—so you can treat your special someone(s)—or yourself, if there's no one else to do it.

This year, let's do something different. Let's forget about sending Valentine cards and buy ourselves unique stationery instead. Let's find the best chocolates and forget to share. For just once, let's send ourselves flowers just because we're worth the delivery charge. And, for goodness' sake, let's skip amateur night out at the restaurants.

Come spend an afternoon at Nutmeg's I Heart You, February 11. We'll be the ones with the paraffin dip on our hands! ▣



Photos Courtesy of Nutmeg Style

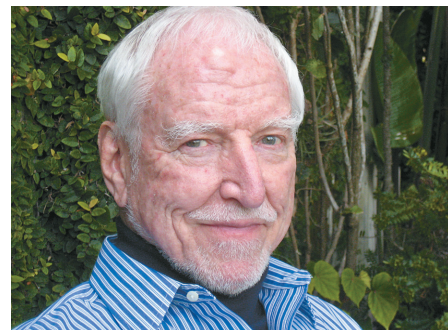


**I Heart You**—A Valentine's Market  
 Saturday, February 11th 1-8pm  
 @ The Parlor  
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## James C. Hormel: Fit to Serve

The core of James C. Hormel's memoir, *Fit to Serve*, is the book's subtitle: *Reflections of a Secret Life, Private Struggle, and Public Battle to Become the First Openly Gay U.S. Ambassador*. Born in 1933 in Austin, Minnesota, Hormel grew up surrounded by wealth from the family's meatpacking industry—SPAM the apex of its empire. It was a time when homosexuality was not mentioned, when innumerable young men and women, Hormel included, agonized and hid their private selves. Hormel relates how he overcame private and public obstacles to enter public life and serve his state and country in *Fit to Serve*. Hormel recently spoke with *Lavender*, discussing aspects of varied and vivid life.



James C. Hormel. Photo provided by

**You grew up in a loving and wealthy family, yet knew you were “different.” Much of your early turmoil, including failing out of Princeton, had to do with not recognizing or accepting—or being able to publicly express—who you really are. How important is it for us all when it is possible—to be out and proclaim our “otherness,” G, L, B, or T?**

Without question, coming out is the single most important thing an LGBT person can do for himself or herself. It lets people know who we really are, and it helps them see that we are *part* of them, not *apart* from them. As I say in my book, we would not have made progress on LGBT rights were it not for the thousands of people across the country, in big cities and small towns, who had the courage to be out. And we won't truly have all our rights until *all* of us are out.

**You were involved in the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s – is it fair or unfair to make a comparison between that movement, which also involved issues of job and housing discrimination and marriage strictures, and the work going on now to have equal rights for all citizens regardless of race, sex, gender or sexual orientation?**

At their hearts, both movements were/about rights and equality, and the desires of a group of people to be judged as individuals,

and not by any particular circumstance of race or sexual orientation. Nevertheless, we need to be cautious about the comparisons. The terrible history of slavery is very different from the LGBT history of secrecy and denial.

**You recount an episode in May, 1970, when you and your brother, Thomas, were in Bangkok, of having an adverse reaction to a friendly young American GI, thinking, “Why are you taking part in the massacres in Vietnam?” then almost immediately feeling ashamed, realizing, “I did not see him as an individual, or acknowledge the humanity in him.” Would you say this same failure or refusal to see is a barrier to accepting GLBT folks now?**

I included this anecdote in the book to make a point about how easy it is for all of us, any of us, to judge another individual on the basis of something external, or some assumption we make about them, rather than seeing them for who they really are. It's not easy to control those assumptions, but anytime we make an effort to approach someone with an open heart, and make a genuine effort to accept them, we also do something wonderful for ourselves.

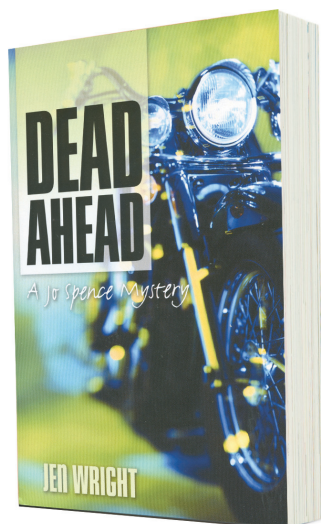
**A “problem” arose after you donated funds in 1991 to create what became the James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Cen-**

**ter of the San Francisco Public Library. Opponents called you a “pedophile,” and ignored the fact that not only did you not personally choose the contents, but that many of the materials reside also in the Library of Congress. How does one—can one—anticipate or combat the opposition’s use of blatant untruth and slander?**

This was a major strategic issue in my ambassadorial fight: should we publicly fight slander allegations, or would that only succeed in giving more life to the allegations and more credibility to those who leveled them? In general, it's very important to get the facts in circulation as quickly as possible, but on occasion it's better to let these stories die a natural death. I often wonder if Fred Phelps and his so-called church would go away if no media ever covered them.

**In 1997, after you’d served on two separate delegations to the United Nations, President Clinton nominated you to be Ambassador to Luxembourg. The confirmation process was lengthy and heated, several Senators in particular working to prevent your confirmation from coming to the floor for a vote. Finally, in 1999, Clinton appointed you to the post. Would you comment... (interview continued online at [www.lavender-magazine.com](http://www.lavender-magazine.com))** □





### ***Dead Ahead: A Jo Spence Mystery***

**Jen Wright**  
**Clover Valley Press**  
**\$14.95**

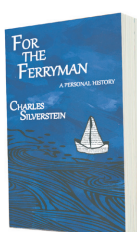
The third in Wright's Jo Spence series finds Jo jolted awake. She'd been flying, without a helmet, along Lake Superior and onto the lift bridge, on her Honda Silverwing GL 500, when suddenly, there was no more bridge and she was literally flying... This premonitory atmosphere pervades the rest of the book. The survivalist father of one of her young probationary clients becomes threatening and is implicated in the fire bombing of a judge's home; a woman in a black Camry begins stalking Jo and her lover Zoey. The theme of salvation and renewal is also present in Jo's efforts to help her client, Brian, create a life different from his father's drugs and paranoid rants. Wright builds the tension deftly to a surprising and deadly finale.



### ***Buyer's Remorse: Book I in The Public Eye Mystery Series***

**Lori L. Lake**  
**Quest Books**  
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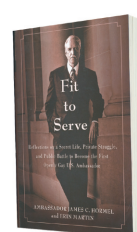
Fans of Lake's previous books will delight in the debut of her new series featuring Sergeant Leona (Leo) Reese, 33, a police patrol sergeant with more than 10 years in law enforcement. Out of the blue, the usually expert marksman Leo fails her bi-annual qualification, and to her chagrin is assigned a desk job with the (highly inefficient) Department of Human Services. Leo's first case is the murder of an elderly woman in an independent living facility. Her personal attention to detail and insistence on following all leads reveals the case is of greater magnitude and wider and more ominous than had appeared. Even more ominous is the diagnosis returned by the ophthalmologist she visits at the insistence of her partner Daria. Await volume two...



### ***For the Ferryman: A Personal History***

**Charles Silverstein**  
**Chelsea Station Editions**  
**\$20.00**

Silverstein's, 1973 presentation before the American Psychiatric Association led to the removal of homosexuality as a mental illness in the organization's diagnostic manual. He is also author of the 1977 *The Joy of Gay Sex*, with Edmund White, and *The New Joy of Gay Sex* with Felice Picano. While this memoir recounts these and other aspects of Silverstein's protean life, at the heart is his 20-year relationship with William Bory, 23 to Silverstein's 38 when they met. Notes close friend White, Silverstein presents William, "with all his charm and sexual allure and intellectual brilliance and all his maddening faults." If you have ever, looking at another's relationship, been tempted to scream, "Why don't you leave him?" Silverstein's honest, painful, and loving memoir may provide understanding.



### ***Fit to Serve: Reflections of a Secret Life, Private Struggle, and Public Battle to Become the First Openly Gay U.S. Senator***

**Ambassador James C. Hormel and Erin Martin**  
**Skyhorse Publishing**  
**\$24.95**

James C. Hormel's early life could be seen as a template for the lives of many gay or lesbian kids. A nice home, loving parents and siblings, and yet, something about them is different. Hormel, born in Austin, Minnesota, in 1933, had those things in superabundance (His father owned the company that invented SPAM.) He married, as he was expected to, and fathered four children—and yet...Life didn't change until he came out, to others as well as himself. He recounts his activist work in New York City in the 1960s and San Francisco in the 1970s, and political work culminating in his breaking, with the assistance of then President Clinton, the "Pink Ceiling" to become the first openly gay ambassador (to Luxembourg) in 1999. (See Interview with Hormel in this issue.)





# Québec City, Québec

Manger pour vivre  
ou vivre pour manger?  
Bon appétit!



Would you rather live to eat, or eat to live?

Yeah, me too. That's why we pinnacles of the evolved palate love French food, while Neanderthals gnaw bones. So I'm channeling Escoffier as I dine on foie gras, escargot, sweetbreads, Châteaubriand, macaroons—the Gold Standard of French cuisine. But—mon Dieu!—I'm not in Paris, I'm in Québec City—Paris without the price, or attitude.

I'm dining in Le Château Frontenac, in fact—the icon of the town. The fairytale hotel anchors the bluff above the river where

explorer Samuel Champlain landed in 1608 to found what's now called “the most European city in North America.” His statue salutes the Place d'Armes, mecca of Old Quebec, clad in venerable stone houses, shops, churches, while below—far, far below, as your shins will later testify—lies the Old Port, where fur traders first camped on the St. Lawrence, paying homage in pelts to Louis XIV, whose statue commands the 400-year-old Place Royale.

Patrolling its boutiques, we stop for hot chocolate and maple sugar candy. Then, scrubbed up, return for dinner at Restaurant



Initiale, fit for a modern monarch—haute but far from haughty—to enjoy beet salad siding a mini saddle of rabbit, followed by duck flavored with clementines, smoked chestnuts and leeks; then a smooth, smooth chestnut cream perfumed with quince and saffron.

Next, a blast from the past that continues to delight diners in the here-and-now, Le Continental—a clubby café doing business for 55 years in a building of 1845, serving us foie gras (yes!!) followed by the house specialty, filet mignon grilled table-side, then, also fired right before our eyes, crêpe Suzette.

Then, a taste of tomorrow's thinking in St-Roch—a neighborhood once lush with fine furriers and department stores, then fallen into dishabille and home to down-and-outers. Today, it's revived by avant artistes and foresighted entrepreneurs, such as young Mathieu Brisson, who trained in palaces of gastronomy. But in his sunny, modern bistro, he's abandoned frou-frou and formality in favor of great food at great prices—what he calls “bistronomy”: dishes like creamy celery-parship soup painted with a golden splash of lobster oil, served with shrimp and lobster salad on tiny toasts; then duck confit or, even better, salmon tartare

in pink grapefruit vinaigrette with beet-and-fennel salad. For dessert, a soft cheese of caramelized milk, served with maple syrup. Says Mathieu, “Québec is a community that cares about food.” He's prepared to answer the call.

We walk off the meal along the avenue, breaking for a chocolatier, a tea salon, and yes, more food, at Les Bossus, for a taste of steak tartare by another chef/patron open to opportunity who took over a longtime neighborhood café.

We set off the next day for another off-the-tour-bus quarter of the city, the working-class Faubourg Saint-Jean, with a scavenger hunt to fuel our lunch. Following assignments, we scoured the avenue's many mom-and-pops for bread, cheese, olives, salad, chocolates, cookies, and my mission—pâtes and sausages, which I sleuthed among the locals at Épicerie Européenne, “the oldest grocery store in North America.” Then, macaroons in every rainbow hue at the newly-opened Biscuiterie Lady Kookie, as modern as tomorrow. We gathered for pot (or, sack) lunch at l'Église Saint-Jean-Baptiste of 1884, a gorgeous parish church.

Walking off the *avoirdufois*, I spent the af-

ternoon at the Musée de la Civilisation, learning the story of Québec's patchwork quilt of immigrants and of the land's First Nations.

Then off to dinner at L'Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations, a stylish new enterprise of the Wendake (Huron) tribe, where Chef Martin Gagné melds his people's time-honored hunting-gathering fare with plate presentations worthy of a gallery. Among our bounty: bonbons of smoked salmon; foie gras with haskap berries spread on bannock bread; squab glazed with molasses and birch syrup, served with cattail sauce; elk tartare with fir jelly; and crème brûlée with frozen maple crystals. Because we begged, the chef brought out tidbits of grilled seal, normally on another season's menu: best meal of a week of best meals.

Wait! Here's another. We spent our final day a few miles north on the Île d'Orléans, the agricultural Eden of Québec, where artisans produce wine, smoked fish, maple everything, apples to pick or purchase, and the reason God invented them at Ciderie Bilodeau, open for tastings of its famed sparkling ice cider, made from frozen apples—plus syrup, pies, jellies, mustard and chutney from the orchard.



Continued on page 53

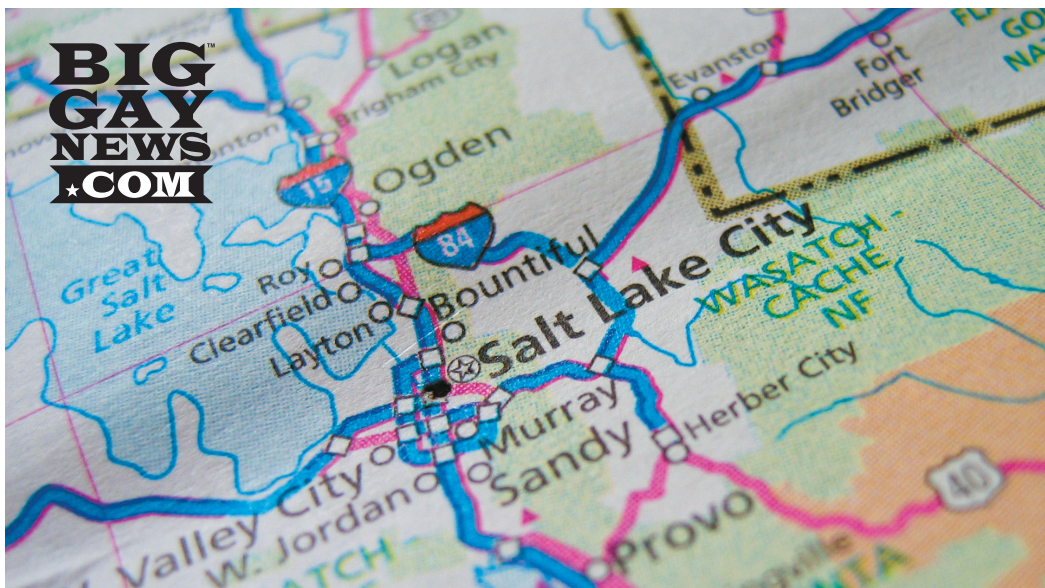


(Opposite page) Porte Prescott (gate) and Château Frontenac in winter. Photo by Yves Tessier, Tessima; (This page, clockwise from top left) Old Québec at night in winter. Photo by Jean-François Bergeron, Enviro Foto; Country landscape on Île d'Orléans. Photo by Sébastien Larose; Rue du Petit-Champlain (street) at Christmas time. Photo by Yves Tessier, Tessima.





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## Salt Lake Voted Gayest City in the US

CNN reports that *The Advocate* has named Salt Lake City, Utah the Gayest City in America. *The Advocate* ranked cities according to its own list of non-scientific criteria, including number of GLBT elected officials and number of International Mr. Leather competition semifinalists. Other cities on the top 15 included, Denver Colorado, Austin Texas, and Little Rock, Arkansas.

### Minnesota Public School Teachers Call For Gay-Friendly Policies

Think Progress reports that MN's Anoka-Hennepin school district, which has faced criticism for a controversial policy preventing teachers and administrators from talking about sexual orientation, is considering a new policy that would still treat GLBT issues as controversial. Teacher's union President Julie Blaha told reporters, "We need to clearly differentiate between what is an issue and what is somebody's identity." The school board is expected to vote on a new policy later this month.

### Gay Code Breaker Gets UK Stamp Honor

The Star Observer reports that

Britain is honoring mathematician and WWII code breaker Alan Turing with a commemorative stamp. Turing committed suicide in 1954 after being convicted of homosexual acts and being sentenced to chemical castration. In 2009 British Prime Minister Gordon Brown apologized for Turing's treatment. A film of Turing's life reportedly in the works.

### Teen Gets Jail in Bias Beating at NYC Gay Bar

The Associated Press reports that 18 year old Christopher Orlando was sentenced to two months in jail for his role in an anti-gay attack at the landmark New York gay bar, the Stonewall Inn. Co-defendant Matthew Francis is

already serving two years in prison for the attack.

### Washington Governor Supports Gay Marriage Law

Reuters reports that Washington Governor Christine Gregoire has announced her support for gay marriage legislation. The legislation is expected to be introduced in the state legislature in January. Gregoire told reporters, "It is time in Washington state for marriage equality."

### Two Men Beaten by Trio Who Allegedly Thought They Were Gay

FOX News reports that Santa Barbara police are looking for three men accused of beating up two men- who the trio thought to be gay-near a down-

town bar. The attack, which was captured on video, is being treated as a hate crime.

### Malaysian Gay Rights Activists Challenge Government in Court to Quash Ban

The Washington Post reports that gay activists filed a lawsuit, challenging a police ban on an anti-homophobia arts festival. Organizers of the Sexual Independence festival which has been held since 2008 decided to file suit after police ordered them to cancel the event, following complaints from Muslim organizations.

### Kristy McNichol Comes Out of the Closet to Help Bullied Kids

ABC News reports that actress Kristy McNichol, known for her roles on television series *Family* and *Empty Nest*, has come out in order to help children who are bullied. McNichol, 49 has lived with her partner Martie Allen for the past two decades. People Magazine reported that McNichol chose to come out now because she is "approaching 50 and wants to be open about who I am."

Pope Says Gay Marriage a Threat to Humanity's Future Reuters reports that Pope Benedict said that gay marriage was a threat to the traditional family and undermined, "the future of humanity itself." The Pope made his comments during an address to the diplomatic core at the Vatican. The Pope is expected to elevate New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan, a leading opponent of same-sex marriage in the US, to cardinal next month. □



## TRAVEL

Continued from page 51

Next, a pair of cheese makers who've rediscovered the recipe for the region's oldest cheese—paillasan—a soft, mellow round that can be heated sans melting—like fondue without the tangles.

Then a maker of the red currant liqueur called cassis. Monsieur Monna brought the technique from his family's French preserve; here at Monna & Filles, his two charming daughters offer tastes and hints for flavoring sangria, Champagne, or, for heaven's sake, beer.

Then the moment I'd been waiting for, lunch at the Ferme au Goût d'Autrefois (Farm of Old-time Tastes), a 200-year-old farmhouse renovated as home-cum-restaurant by Jean Legros, also known (well, by me) as Father Goose for daddying his flock of geese until it's time for foie gras—done here sans the force-feeding folks despise ("I'd rather shut down my farm than do that," Jean declaims with passion). Instead, he breeds his birds to be very, very hungry. "Venez, venez! Mangez!" he calls—Come and eat, and do they ever. He grows all his veggies organically, substituting TLC for machinery.

We dined on rillettes of goose, duck and turkey, spread on bread he's baked with goose fat (one word: yum!). On to smoked goose breast surrounded by farm veggies, then a cloud of maple mousse.

Hungry? Find out more at [www.regiondequebec.com](http://www.regiondequebec.com). Faubourg walking food tours: [www.toursvoirquebec.com](http://www.toursvoirquebec.com). ■

### SIDEBAR

Gay Bars: **Le Drague** offers something for everyone, from country dancing and karaoke to drag shows and disco nights.

**Le Bar St-Matthews** draws a crowd that's a little older—a bar for casual conversations.

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## Against the Amendment: Interview with Susan Jennerjohn

SUSAN JENNERJOHN, a recent transplant to a Minneapolis suburb from Iowa, is a mother of 3 and grandmother to one. She's a retired special education and kindergarten teacher of nearly 40 years, and super volunteer for Minnesotans United for All Families.

**Lavender Magazine: You're a straight woman, with no gay children. Why did you decide to get involved in this campaign?**

**Susan Jennerjohn:** The process I went through to becoming an active supporter of same-sex marriage was gradual. I can think of a few experiences that stand out in my mind.

I was working full time and raising three kids so was involved in their activities and church. We had no contact with the LGBT community and I guess we just assumed that there weren't gay kids at school. In hindsight, that seems pretty ridiculous.

Two of my children had close friends who came out after going to college. Unfortunately, neither of these young people felt comfortable coming out while in high school. Here were two young people in my personal experience that couldn't be honest about their sexuality. Those kids could have been my kids.

Around this same time a new teacher came to my school. One of the first times we visited, I noticed she didn't have on a wedding ring, but was talking about her kids. Being recently divorced, I thought I had found a friend or at least a kindred spirit. But then, she told me she wasn't divorced. In fact, she

was gay and she and her partner of over 15 years had adopted two children. She kept her personal life somewhat under wraps because a few staff members were not accepting.

**LM: So, it was the personal relationship that really motivated you?**

**SJ:** Yes, the more I thought about her life, the more I realized how much we shared in common. A dedicated teacher, a caring parent, a middle class woman, someone who needed to lose weight, involved in her church, caring for older parents, close to her siblings... you get the drift. But unlike me, she constantly felt she had to be on guard about her personal life.

She informed me of the organization *One Iowa* – I volunteered there and am so proud of the work we did to make sure all loving and committed couples have the opportunity to marry each other if they chose to.

**LM: How long have you been volunteering with MN United?**

**SJ:** It's been a few months now. I've got a regular schedule and look forward to seeing the team! I manage the front desk; do data entry – whatever I can to help out.

**LM: What do you enjoy about your volunteer job?**

**SJ:** The thing they don't tell you when you retire is that you don't see your friends every day any longer! Minnesota is still pretty new to me – this is a great way to meet

new people who share a common goal and similar values.

The staff and volunteers at MN United are friendly and welcoming and really value the time that you give. I know the work I'm doing here is making a difference. And most importantly, I know that I'll be a part of a historic victory and even prouder to call myself a Minnesotan.

**LM: What lessons learned as a teacher guide your volunteerism at MN United?**

**SJ:** A teacher has to be pretty flexible when teaching children. When a squirrel is playing in the tree outside the classroom window or the repairman comes to fix the faucet, it's pretty hard to keep a reading group going.

Volunteering also requires flexibility. When the folks at MN United asked me to change an existing plan, they made sure I was comfortable with my new task. I am amazed at the level of organization at MN United, especially since they have been together such a short time.

**LM: What advice would you give to others that are interested in volunteering?**

**SJ:** Just look for what interests you – the need is there. I volunteer a few hours each day – three times a week in an elementary school and two times a week at MN United. I will miss working with the folks at MN United after we defeat this constitutional amendment. ▣

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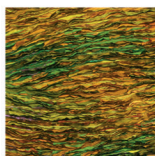
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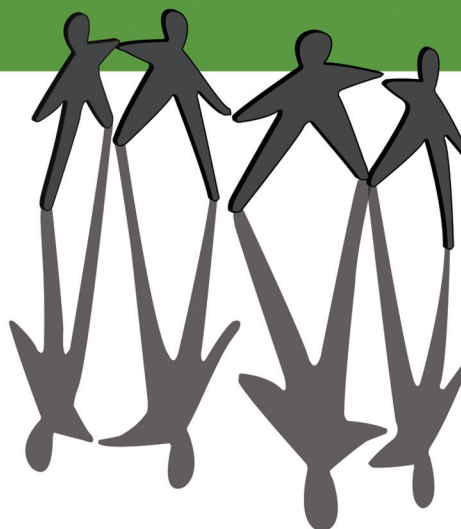
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# The Brighter Side of Winter

WITH THE garden tucked away for winter and hardy plants settled into dormancy, gardeners too can think about taking a little rest. After all, like the plants, we need a little downtime to be ready to go come spring. Now is the time to enjoy the parts of life that we often sacrifice in the quest for the perfect garden. Read a book. Enjoy a drink. Get a massage. Take a vacation. Go to the gym. Have a party. Build a fire. Visit a friend. Why not? The gardening intermission that winter offers should be a time to treasure and be thankful for. We will be better gardeners in the spring after this rejuvenation. Absence does make the heart grow fonder – and our longest season seems to make us all yearn for the connection to the earth that gardening brings us. If time allows between your vacation in the southern hemisphere, your next cocktail party, or before your spa appointment, you might be able to partake in these winter gardening ideas.

Force bulbs to make even the dreariest winter days brighter. Tropical bulbs like amaryllis and paperwhites are very easy and the diversity in offerings has never been so exciting. Other bulbs, such as tulips, hyacinths and crocus can be forced as well, but require a cold dormancy after potting in order to induce flowering. Not a big deal; the bottom shelf of your refrigerator works great for this. After a minimum of 6-8 weeks they can be moved to a sunny windowsill to bloom. If you don't have the refrigerator space, don't fret. The garden center will have bulb planters ready for you to force into bloom at your home.

Introduce a few more houseplants into your home. This is the time of year we appreciate them the most. Houseplants are easy regardless of how green your thumb is. Simply pair the right plant with the right environment and right care. The easiest way to achieve good results with this recipe is to have the experts help. Horticulturists make excellent matchmakers. Let us help you choose the best plants suited for your light levels, schedule, and style. It is fun for us to help our plants find good homes.

Make a visit to the Marjorie McNeeley

Conservatory in Como Park, the Cowles Conservatory at Minneapolis' Sculpture Garden, or a trek to the garden center to see what's new and what you cannot live without. The smell of the earth and growing plants will quickly erase any remnant of the deep winter blues. The Marjorie McNeeley Conservatory and the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum also offer great gardening classes and workshops.

Pick up a copy or two of your favorite garden magazines for future and current inspiration. A few of our favorites include *Fine Gardening*, *Garden Design*, and the *Northern Gardener*. Bonnie Blodgett's locally produced *Garden Letter* is also a great read. Keep a folder with "tear-outs" of articles, images and photos that you like. A folder like this is a great tool for referencing and constructing ideas for future garden endeavors.

With the hours of daylight increasing more and more each day, Spring is closer than you think. Appreciate these days for what they offer as we prepare to put out the big welcome mat for the next gardening season. □

Scott Endres is co-owner of Tangletown Gardens and the Wise Acre Eatery on 54th and Nicollet in South Minneapolis.



Photos Courtesy of Tangletown Gardens



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## Deafness and Jealousy

### Dear Ms. Behavior:

I'm a lesbian and slightly hard of hearing. Last night a friend told me about a scientific report from a few years ago, alleging that lesbians have hearing similar to that of straight men. I'm not sure if that means my hearing is better or worse than other women. Do you know anything about this study? If the report is true, does that make me more of a dyke than my friends? Is that a good thing?

—DEAF DORA

### Dear Deaf Dora:

Does your deafness make you more of a dyke? Not really. But your desire to know how you measure up does make you seem a bit like a competitive straight guy.

Heterosexual scientists (and sometimes queer ones, too) often try to find evidence that lesbians are different from straight people. Duh. Such scientists typically search for extra hormones, enlarged clitorises, different brain structures, and finally, hearing differences.

It's hard to imagine a bigger waste of research funding – at least until such time that we can put the information to more useful purpose – like perhaps creating an environment that is hospitable to all of our species. Planet Lesbian, anyone? The real problem with the design of such “Utopian” places is that they're limited by the imagination of their planners. (To Whom it May Con-

cern: Please don't make us wear matching haircuts or listen to folk music or play golf. Please don't put those who wear make-up in one building and those who wear whistles around their necks in another. Please include an anti-drama clause in the by-laws. And no tents, lutes, or incense, please.)

Despite continued correspondence from Ms. Behavior, scientists completely ignore the more obvious evidence of actual lesbian differences, like acute seriousness, inability to tolerate fragrances, and an overwhelming attraction toward Subaru Outbacks and dogs that are part wolf. (Ms. Behavior recently completed her extensive study confirming these facts to be true even of lesbians raised in captivity but no one has offered a dime to fund her research.)

### Dear Ms. Behavior:

Last night my boyfriend Joel and I were out with friends. The conversation turned to sex, and Joel revealed that he'd been with over 1700 men before we met. We've been monogamous for three years and I had no idea!

I'm no prude, but I'm shocked by the math. Joel is 30 and was sexually active for five years before we met, which means he had sex seven days a week with no holidays or sick time!

I don't doubt his devotion to me, but I can't stop envisioning Joel having sex with strangers. I feel sick and jealous. I want to

ask questions that will probably make me feel worse. I don't want to ruin our relationship. What should I do?

—SKEEVED

### Dear Skeeved:

Joel is the same person he was last week, before you found out he's a former slut. If he was trustworthy then, he still is.

Retroactive jealousy is destructive. It's okay to tell Joel that the conversation made you feel anxious and jealous, so that you don't instead act out your insecurity or pick fights. But don't count on reassurance from him, because he probably won't understand your need for it. After all, his 'ho'ing days are not news to him, and he still feels the same love for you that he felt before this discussion.

After a brief conversation with Joel, you'll be better off discussing your feelings with a trusted friend or therapist. You'll also need to silence your mind – this would be a good time to meditate on a lotus flower – and not feed into your worries. Do NOT ask for details that you don't actually want. They'll keep you awake at night.

If you're lucky, after a few weeks of disciplined meditative practice, your sexual jealousy may actually turn to arousal. Then, if your mind wanders and you still imagine Joel in a variety of steamy sexual scenarios, you may find that it fuels your connection with him instead of your jealous indignation. □

TROLÍN, UN DIABLITO ROSA



When I was young, they threw me out of the house for being gay.  
Quand j'étais jeune, on m'a jeté dehors parce que j'étais gai.



I was fired from my job for the same reason.  
De mon côté, on m'a congédié pour la même raison.



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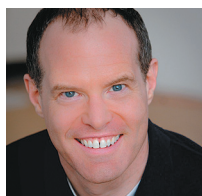
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# My Role Models

I'M WRITING THIS in a hospital. My mother and I are waiting for my father to come out of surgery. He needs surgery because he injured himself while chopping down a tree yesterday. My father is 81-years-old. Why was an 81-year-old chopping down a tree? According to my mother, he's trying to kill himself in order to get out of attending their 50th anniversary party.

Before he was wheeled into surgery, a nurse gave him a pile of papers to sign.

"What's this?" my mother said, grabbing a document out of the stack.

"It's a DNR. It means that we will take no heroic measures to resuscitate your husband if he should stop breathing," the nurse explained. My father happily grabbed the paper and prepared to sign it.

"Not so fast," my mother said, snatching the paper from him. "We're not signing that. You WILL be resuscitated because you ARE going to that party. Even if I have to wheel you there in an iron lung. We'll use you as the centerpiece."

This has been the central theme of my parents' marriage: my mother tells my dad what to do, and my father goes to extremes to defy her.

For all my ex-girlfriends who bitterly demand an explanation as to why I am the way I am, I present my parents as Exhibit A. These people are my relationship role models.

In many ways, my parents are a complete

mismatch. My mother is highly social; loves parties, people, and fashion; can talk and shop for hours without respite; and enjoys nothing more than bullying her loved ones into submission. By contrast, my father loves only food, golf, and driving his children to and from the airport. He regularly disappears during the middle of parties without explanation and puts himself to bed. Only to be awakened rudely when my mother turns on the lights and demands that he return to his guests.

My mother was engaged three times before finally settling on my father. When I asked why she chose him over her other suitors, she said: "I knew he'd be a worthy opponent, and he has been. We've been fighting for 50 years and neither of us has won yet."

The one thing that my parents have in common is their love of a good fight. They bicker over everything, no matter how mundane. They take opposing positions even if there is no position to take. Once they had a long screaming match over whether Jodie Foster should be allowed to make a movie about Leni Riefenstahl, and only paused momentarily when I pointed out that they were in total agreement on the issue. So, they shifted gears and found a new and equally stupid topic to argue about.

What I learned from growing up in a battle zone is that it's kind of fun. You shout a lot, wave your arms around, threaten to kill each

other, and then get on with your day. There can never be any grudges or hard feelings when you are constantly vomiting out every emotion the moment you feel it. My parents are war buddies. Granted, they fought for opposing countries, but they lived through it together and have a reluctant but healthy respect for each other.

My mom and I were at my dad's bedside following surgery.

"Am I alive?" he asked, still doopey from drugs.

"Yep! Sorry to disappoint you," my mother said, merrily. She pulled a pad of paper from her purse and began reading off his to-do list for the 50th anniversary party.

"Pull the plug," my father pleaded to me. The only plug I could find was connected to a fan, so I yanked it from the wall.

"Plug that back in!" my mother demanded. And that touched off an hour-long debate between my parents over whether the room was too stuffy. □



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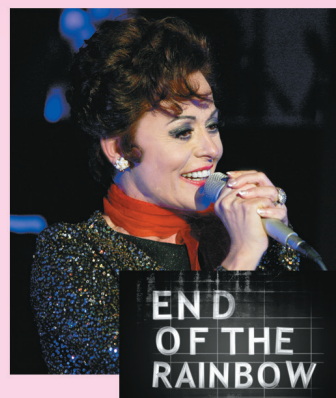


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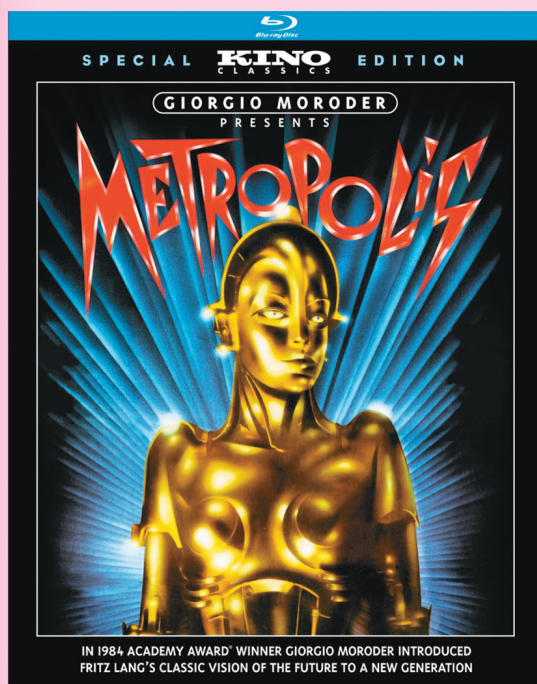
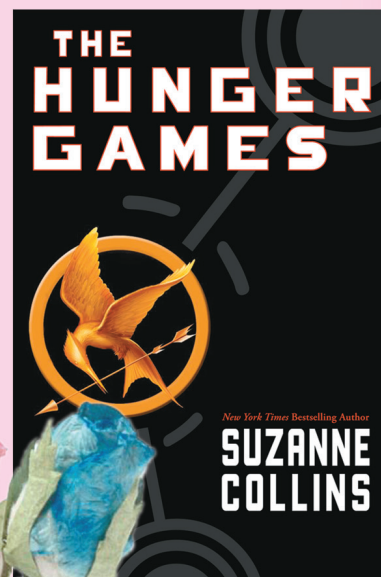
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1. Zen Box Izakaya Gift Card, [zenboxizakaya.com](http://zenboxizakaya.com). Right around the corner from the Guthrie (hint hint), is a brand-new Japanese restaurant perfect for a post-theater nosh or foodie explorer's night out. Zen Box Izakaya, unique among local Japanese restaurants, offers a tasty array of Japanese comfort foods, like kara age (fried chicken) and their signature kim chee ramen. 2. J&D's baconlube™ (\$11.99), [baconlube.com](http://baconlube.com). If the crispy, meaty crunch of a plate full of bacon isn't enough to send your paramour into fits of porcine passion, the folks at J&D's have just the marital aid: baconlube. Yes, baconlube. As in, a personal lubricant that smells and tastes of your favorite meat candy. Ooh la oink! 3. *End of the Rainbow*, Guthrie Theater (\$29-67), [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org), through March 11. Now's your chance to give the gift of a once-in-a-lifetime theatrical event. Award-winning British actress Tracie Bennett brings her Broadway-bound performance as Judy Garland in Peter Quilter's *End of the Rainbow* to the Guthrie. 4. Giorgio Moroder Presents *Metropolis*: Special Edition [Blu-ray] (\$20.99), [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). Curl up with some bacon-flavored popcorn (J&D's sells that too and it's TOF: To Oink For) and pop in the newly re-mastered 1982 Giorgio Moroder edited version of *Metropolis*, complete with 80s pop/rock soundtrack. Released for the first time on DVD/Blu-ray since it premiered, this classic sci-fi love story. 5. *The Hunger Games* (\$5.39), [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). Nothing says, "I love you" like a televised hunt to the death! I'm halfway through and I can't put *The Hunger Games* down! If your date is a sci-fi loving bookworm like me, I guarantee you'll get some action gifting this adventure trilogy. And best of all, it's on its way to theaters! 6. Elephant POOPOOPAPER™ Roses Bouquet (\$17.99), <http://store.poopoopaper.com>



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## How to Meet a Stranger

PARENTS PROVIDE SOME helpful hints for navigating life; through their guidance, we learn how not to die. Like, you know, when they teach us to look both ways before crossing a street. Or to abstain from playing with fire and knives. Lessons we take to heart, and abide by in adulthood.

But there is at least one lesson we learn as children that deserves repeal as an adult: Don't Talk to Strangers. Unfortunately, this also happens to be one to which we continue to adhere long after we leave the nest.

We're conditioned from our earliest memories to avoid strangers. We shouldn't take candy from them, we shouldn't climb into their cars, and we sure as hell better not talk to them. To do so risks being sent to that awful land called Missing.

"You see," mom tells you during an episode of *America's Most Wanted*, "that's what happens to kids when they talk to strangers. They go missing."

"They go to Missing?" you ask, now terrified just before bedtime.

"Yes, sweetie, they go missing. There's a lot of bad people out there. It's best not to risk it."

And the night brings dreams of Strangers sweeping us off to Missing, the land of forgotten children, where who knows what happens to you—but whatever it is, it isn't good. Necessary advice when we're young.

As an adult, however, this advice yields

a negative effect. Keeping quiet around strangers as an adult prevents one from making crucial social connections.

There are a lot of people who make the transition successfully—people we envy for amassing many close friends and big social networks. We call these people "outgoing" and "friendly." As long as they're tasteful in their approach, they're the people we want to know—the fascinating and charming.

But the rest of us are as reserved as we were when we were kids. Talking to a stranger on an elevator? Sinful. Striking up a conversation with the person next to you on a plane? Impolite. Engaging the sandwich artist at Subway? She doesn't want to talk to you anyway. Right?

And the bar scene, oh! Talking to strangers at the bar is the ultimate no-no. "He's with his friends... He doesn't want to be bothered... He probably wouldn't like me anyway," you reason.

Excuses. The REAL reason we don't talk to strangers more often is because we're uncomfortable. Reckoning childhood philosophy, something bad will come of talking to strangers. The consequence: rejection, or, even worse, an awkward, forced conversation. Best not to risk it.

Hmm. What if... and bear with me here... what if we're wrong? What if an introduction to the guy at the bar led to a date, and the date led to a second, and the second led to

a kiss, and the kiss.... you get my point. And what if it didn't? So what? We're left with exactly what we had to begin with. But if we choose NOT to speak to him, we'll never know.

Same goes for friendship. If I stayed quiet the night I met my friend Ty just because I was in a room full of strangers, we wouldn't have become friends, and I would've missed out on who I now refer to as My Sister From Another Mister.

Easier said than done? Yeah. We're social animals, and no one wants to feel rejected. What if he rejects you AND makes fun of you afterward for talking to him? Ouch. Good news here, folks: those instances are few and far between. Most people feel the same way we do. And even if they're assholes, we find out in a snap that they aren't worth our time anyway.

So how do you meet a stranger? You try. My method: approach someone and say hello, pay them a quick compliment ("Love your shirt"), and assess if the conversation is worth pursuing. Yes, you may be rejected. But so were all those charismatic, popular people who have thriving social lives. The difference is resilience. Make one friend out of every 10 strangers you talk to, and you'll realize very quickly that 9 "No's" are worth every moment. ▣

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